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VARIED VERSES

BY

CARTER S. COLE

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LOS ANGELES

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VARIED VERSES

BY

CARTER S. COLE, M. D.

NEW YORK
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FOREWORD

Some of these verses were published in a limited de luxe edition entitled, "Lays and Lyrics"; and, of these, many have been given musical settings. Of those now published for the first time, several have already received a musical interpretation.

The German translations were all done for the musical settings the poems had received in the original tongue.

The collection now presented may or may not be thought worth while by the public; but the verses are the occasional outbursts of the dormant lyrical impulses in a busy professional life: perhaps, they shall find a sympathetic appreciation in the hearts of those who have been unable to give a metrical expression to their feelings: in any case, it is the hope of the writer that they may add a joy to the life of some one.

C. S. C.

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OCCASIONAL OFFERINGS

MEDITATION

So near the busy throng,
And yet, so still, along
The river bank we strolled,
Gazing with grateful eyes
Westward on purple skies,
Watching the tints of gold
And copper on the clouds
Fading, changing into blue:
But the idle, curious crowds
Never looked and never knew
What was going on above,
Never guessed the boundless love
That gave to man the power to see
Beyond this sphere—Infinity—
But, soon, the veil of night
Shut out the clouds from sight.

A SOLACE

IMPRESSING a kiss
On the heart of a pink,
She gave it to me:
The longer I think
Of the meaning of this,
The harder to see
What the outcome must be;
For, surely the flower
Will never consent
To part with its prize:
Nor am I content
To give up the dower
That dazzled my eyes:
The plant itself dies,
But the kiss ever lives;
And the sweet, tender thought
That the maid had in mind,
Which my fancy then caught,
To my heart always gives
A solace, I find,
When the Fates are unkind!

A SNOW SCENE

FALLING the snow:
Writhing with pain, a woman cries,—
The minutes seem eternities;
Greatest of all events on earth
Impends—another mortal soul—
How can it know
The reason why?—is seeking birth,
And starting towards the common goal
That every living thing must find:
Whirling the years go like the wind—
Why is this so?
Tortuous, long and lone the way
Those tender feet must tread each day,
Unless the spirit spurns the flesh,
Dreading the cares that life enmesh,
Eager to go.
The terrors here, hereafter dark,
Do not deter the singing lark;
The joy of love and laughter lend
Sweetness to life until the end,
Whether or no!

BOATING

DRIFTING on the dappled lake,
Riplets, rhythmic messengers
Tell the pebbled shore; our wake
Furrows where the mirrored light
Dancing stays, then disappears,
Filling us with keen delight,
Floating.

Dreaming—
Thinking only joy ahead:
Never giving one wee thought
To the morrow—simply led
By our fancy fickle, free,
Far afield: the truth is naught—
Just a passing phantasy
Seeming.

Groping—
Constantly in different ways
Seeking pleasure, shunning pain,
Spending priceless nights and days
In an endless, bootless quest—
Chasing phantoms—then, again
Burdened by our own unrest—
Hoping.

A WORD

IN reverie, with eye-lids closed, my mind
Neglectful both of space and time, but free
My hand to trace whatever message sought
Transmission from the spirit world, I prayed
For light upon the real joy of life
As well as on the bliss beyond the grave:
A silence dreadful followed for the while
No answer came; but, then, with movement swift,
The fingers wrote one word—and only one—
In answer to my two bequests; the page
Illumined seemed, the mysteries of life
And death were clear, and peace again upon
My senses fell—my soul was glad; the word
That made all plain, and gave new hope was LOVE.

NOW AND THEN

WHAT can be said to the mother heart
To heighten her joy on earth?
Whenever she looks at her counterpart
With luscious, large and laughing eyes,
The sorrows, trials, pains of birth
Forgotten quite, she only heeds
The call of her child, its creature needs,
And happily pictures a later day
When love in completeness comes to stay—
Who dares reckon its worth?

EN PASSANT

THE hem of her gown brushed my foot
as she passed—
Oh, what a thrill,
I feel it still,
My heart-beats tumultous, brain in a whirl,
My breath short and hurried—and all for a
girl
The first time I saw her, perhaps too, the
last!

A decade has gone, still I scan each new
face—
Hopeless it seems,
And yet my dreams
Bring back by day as well as by night
Thoughts of that girl of whom I caught
sight
For a moment, and then lost all trace.

A PROBLEM

A PROBLEM difficult, not rare,
Obtains, as all agree—to choose
A wedding gift appropriate
For one we love. We first must dare
The money value quite to lose;
The tender thought should radiate
From anything we chance to send:
Untold the worth intent may lend
The token from a real friend.

TWO VOICES

ITS plumage not full grown,
A sparrow chirps, concealed by leaves,
Persistently an hour or less,
When straight from out the wilderness
Another bird, swift flown,
Appears and soon the cry relieves
By love and tenderness.

Alas, how many years
A human throat cries piteously
To all the world-indeed, life-long!
The simple burden of its song,
So full of scalding tears,
To reach the heart in sympathy
To which it must belong!

WAITING

A TINY bird, whose pulsing throat
Can scarce expel the trumpet note
Of joy that greets the dawn,
Will carrol forth to land and skies
The beauty of the early morn
That human art and speech defies:
Its language simple, sweet and plain
To all, save man, somewhere
Will thrill the feathered throng; again
Its message trilled, on air
Is borne to one who waits until
The melody may reach and fill
Its heart, and banish care.

WHERE?

WHERE is the land of most delight?
We know the limitations here—
That alternating day and night
Compel a change we often fear:
The joy of love, so fleeting, wakes
Another hope that almost makes
Conviction strong that we shall find
In time, the place that knows no change,
Where human hearts are always kind,
And fancy has its fullest range;
Where nothing may the spirit bind
That seeks its freedom: Am I right
To say it is the Infinite?

AMOUR SANS AMOUR

A SOUL by silence shriven long,
A heart denied its sweetest song,
Would live and throb if touched by light
Unseen for years: for darkest night
Replies with anguish, grief, despair
In answer to the daily prayer.

And shall we mortals never find
True happiness and peace of mind?
Or, shall we struggle aimlessly
Against the highest Heaven's degree,
And rob ourselves of bliss below,
Not knowing when, nor whence we go?

BIRTHDAY

THERE are days to recall
And days to forget:
But the one best of all
Was not when we met—
For that was ordained—
But when you were born!
The month and the morn
Are quite simply explained—
A fortuitous chance,
If they serve to enhance
The natural charm
That was yours from the start:
You need feel no alarm
About age: till you part
With your candor and truth,
You shall always have youth.

DISAPPOINTMENT

I SAW a quill of gold on high
Outlined upon an opal sky
Just as the sun was going down
Resplendent in its nimbus crown.

In vain I sought to grasp the pen
And learn the message it could give;
But while I stood and looked again,
The cloud dissolved: untaught, I live.

AN AFRICAN PIANO

AFRICA my mother,
Jungle-bred and wild,
Never had another
Music making child:
Pine boards bound together,
With a wedge between,
Strips of steel the tether,
Solid, curved, and lean.
From my face, endearing,
Stranger than this tale,
Melodies you're hearing,
In a new-born scale.

HUMAN

DESPISED, outcast,
A loathsome creature in the sight
Of what we choose to call society
Her heart is just as human: right
Appeals, and not alone propriety:
Necessity compels, but with her choice,
Convenience disappears—the voice
Of love commands; and when her tears
Repentent reach the Mercy seat,
And falling bathe the Saviour's feet,
I cannot think, in spirit years,
That she shall find her future lot
Must be with those who are forgot,
Despised, outcast.

SHADOW LAND

WEARY of work, too tired to play,
Watching the evening shadows creep
Silently, while the light of day
Faded, and darkness encouraged sleep,
Fanciful forms invaded my mind,
Phantoms weird of many a kind
Beckoned and nodded with easy grace,
Ceaselessly calling the worn out heart
Back to the shadow-land, restful place
Whither they went, no more to depart.

THE RING

ONCE there was a maiden fair,
Gracious, charming, debonair,
Always by tradition taught
Love, like vestments, could be bought;
That affection, faith, respect,
Wealth compelled; that fools expect
Sentiment: and need I tell
That she learned her lesson well?

Twenty years elapsed, and then,
Gazing on her face again,
Wife and mother, wealth I saw;
But apparent was some flaw
In her happiness—the ring
Had not meant the real thing:
Love neglected gnawed her heart,
While she tried to play the part.

SUNDOWN

I KISSED her as the sun went down
Behind the mountains in the West:
A stillness settled on the land;
The afterglow of gold and brown
Illumined every sheltered nest,
Before the night could lay its hand
Of darkness over all: her eyes,
With sapphire tinged, enthralled my heart;
The simple, sacred silence said
This vital thought: The daylight dies,
But love alone, the better part
Of life, survives when we are dead.

AERIAL POST

ABOVE the earth, on high,
The wings of man, by air
Supported in the sky,
With reckless haste will dare
To speed these lines: must not
A happy, future lot
And path to wealth and fame
As unimpeded wait
The earnest artist? Fate
Cannot ignore the name
To which the Gods are kind
And send a favoring wind!

SANS AMOUR

ALWAYS deprived of one who knows
How, in the hour of need and grief—
Frequent, alas! but rare the relief—
Comfort and peace to find and give,
When the desire to die—not live—
Stronger and strangely grows
Irresistible—such is the lot
Waiting for one who knows love not.

CON AMORE

EVERY joy of life to find,
Sharing with one who understands
What the innermost heart demands,
Reaping a harvest of pleasure here,
Poisoned by neither regret nor fear,
Full of affection for all mankind—
Such is the natural, normal state
When we have found love, soon or late.

A WISTFUL WIND

MY spirit sought a kindred soul to find,
And on the circumambient ether rode
A furious race, and reached the far abode
Of one who understood: a wistful wind,
Laden with scent of lotus bloom,
Kissed two long-lashed lids, and then,
Whispered my secret in sweet perfume,
But never returned to me again.

UNREST

WHAT means this spirit of unrest
That frets my soul, unwelcome guest?
The joys of life that others know,
To me are but a picture show;
The music of the master minds
Within my heart a welcome finds,
But fails to bring the long sought calm
That never knows the slightest qualm:
My friends are kind, and, yet, I feel
A wound that kindness may not heal,
A longing for another heart
That must have been of mine a part:
Perhaps, we only find above
That perfect peace—a perfect love.

GLASS MUSIC

HE sang from the empty glasses to me,
Touching their rims with his finger tips,
And brought into life such a harmony
As never could come from the quivering lips.

Was it the music from nature's shrine,
Stored in the sand for a furnace blaze
To change to a vibrant chord divine
When the hand of the loving master plays?

QUERY

WHAT is the meaning of valentine?
Once in a year there comes the day
Allotted to those who are moved to say
The thing that lies nearest their hearts;
And so I am tempted, before it departs,
To tell you what lingers in mine:
That, despite the fact we have often met,
The word I would utter and may not forget,
Refuses to come when I try to speak:
My courage falters, my heart grows weak—
But the truth is revealed in this line!

WIRELESS

FAIR-HAIRED faery,
Fickle, wary,
Caught and calmed by needful sleep,
Are your fancies
Born of glances
From a mother's vigil deep.

Restless, tireless,
Human wireless,
When awake, a joy untold,
Dreams refreshing,
Love enmeshing,
Tenderly your heart enfold!

SWEETHEART

SWEETHEART—of all—the word supreme!
Each time I hear it when I dream
The face of one alone appears:
Throbbing my temples, hot the tears
That blurred my sight these many years
That failed to make my dreams come true
And give the love my fancy knew.

Over the boundary line between
This life and that in worlds unseen,
They may not speak nor see nor hear—
Still in my heart one thing seems clear,
That if by chance your soul be near,
Some other sense will rend the mist
That filched from love on earth its tryst.

RISEN! REJOICE!

I HEAR a distant voice
Of prophecy that says,
"Peace, prosperity always!"
At last the shackles fall
And free the soul: the pall
Of silence yields, the strain
Of songs inspired, again,
Delights the listening ear,
And many a grateful tear
Fallen: Rejoice!

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA (*Centenary*)

A CENTURY—a puissant span—
Has proved the wisdom of the man
Whose brain conceived the trenchant thought
To give untrammeled knowledge brought
From every source to eager youth:
That naught might dim eternal truth,
Unprejudiced each heart to see
The creed that spelled eternity:
It was not deemed a hopeless plight
To want revealed religious sight:
The soul of every one was free
To fashion its own Deity,
To sound the depths or search the skies
For forms Infinity supplies—
Innumerable, weird and strange,
But never subject to the change
That is the fate of human kind,
The product of the mortal mind.
Transcendant was the precious star
That shone for all both near and far
Called Honour: never corner stone
On which to build a regal throne
More wisely chosen. Tell we must
How faith was justified: the trust
Was not misplaced; and from these walls
The spirit honest met the calls
Of duty unafraid these years
Gone by: the future holds no fears:

Our Alma Mater is the light
That never fails: that guides aright
The heart and brain: her colonades,
With memories of ten decades,
Her sons and daughters shall inspire
To seek and find celestial fire:
Her field the world! Hold up her hands
To guide the youth of many lands!

THE PATH

UPON the path by roses lined
In fancy tread my willing feet:
The breeze through branches intertwined
Continually makes music sweet;
And fire-flies fitfully at night
Emit their tiny, transient flare—
A challenge to the twinkling light
Of orbs celestial: the care
That harries hearts and hurries age
To sound its note can find no tongue:
Instead, the birds in nature's cage,
Before the dawn, the trees among,
Are carolling their peerless lays
To rouse the world from sleep and bring
The joy they know and feel always
To every sentient, mortal thing;
And peace perpetual pervades
The rose-lined path with perfumed shades.

DREAM-ACRE

THE years were long,
The road was hard,
But neither made me doubt my Maker;
And now with song
A nature bard
Salutes the morn in my dream-acre.

The river clear
In full view lies
While on its surface dance the sun-beams:
The blue jay near
With clarion cries
Diverts the channels of my day-dreams.

The beechwood trees
Majestic stand
Around my home above the valley:
With melodies
Untutored, grand
Their branches throb continually.

My wishes now
Are few—that long
The years may last: that not a breaker
May fate allow
To mar the song
Of birds that nest in my dream-acre.

HOME

WHEN are you coming home *chérie*
The place where your heart is at peace?
Already it seems an eternity
Since longings and yearnings should cease:
On every mile of the road for years
The guide-post that pointed the way
Displayed the same message: "A love that endears
Awaits your home-coming to-day."
What has life to offset its numerous woes,
Its worries, burdens and pains,
Unless it be Love—which every one knows
Is the Heaven on earth God ordains.

SUPERLATIVE

WHEN a heart by error tried
Has a feeling desolate,
Knowing from the voice inside
That on love and not on fate
Hangs the happiness of life—
Still it may by faith assured
Learn that from the storms and strife,
Constantly by all endured,
Comes the bliss superlative
When the kindred soul is found,
Making us forget the wound:
Then forever we would live.

TWENTY-ONE

TWENTY-ONE,
Life begun;
Play diminished:
College finished,
Still, the world is full of pleasure,
Heightened now and then by sorrow:
In the mind is found the measure
Making welcome each to-morrow:
In the heart the richest treasure
Of this life is safely guarded
By a perfect intuition;
Heed its warning, be rewarded
By the joys of love's fruition:
Wisdom slowly
Comes, but surely
Smiles upon
Twenty-one.

DUC ALMA LUX

THAT when the cross I see
I know that faith for me
Has made life sweet:

That on my earthly way
Thy never failing ray
Must guide my feet:

That with these mortal eyes
My view of Paradise
May be complete—
Duc alma lux!

AN IDEAL

YOU have heard from the strings
Of a fine violin many wonderful things;
But they cannot begin to compare with the voice
Of the one whom you love,
When she says that your choice
Has brought peace, like the dove.

Though an artist may paint
With remarkable grace and the charms of a saint,
Without having a trace of the human remain;
Still, the composite whole
Of the thought in his brain
Must be limned by the soul.

All the beauties of art
And the wonders of God, to a soulless heart
Are no more than the sod; but the mind, keen and bright
With divine inspiration,
Knows the wonderful sight
In the simplest creation.

PLACE PAINTINGS

AMERICA

LAND of the West,
Hope of the free—
America!
All that is best,
God gaveth thee.

Refuge to all,
Bound by no creed,
America!
You heed the call
Where there is need.

Mountains and plains,
Ore-filled and fair,
America!
Sunshine and rains,
Riches to spare.

Varied the soil,
Bracing the air,
America!
Happy the toil,
Peace everywhere.

Time lays its hand
Gently on thee,
America!
Favored the land,
Home of the free!

NIAGARA

NO simple words of man may tell
The wonder seen, then known so well,
The roar majestic, rich and deep
That thrills, awake, or lulls, asleep;
The fleecy, floating, cooling mist
By rain-bows daily, nightly kissed;
The waters turbulent below
With froth and foam and undertow—
A swirling, seething, whirling force
Forever on its hurried course;
The chasm riven from solid stone
While many centuries have flown:
The Infinite has lain its hand
Upon the waters and the land!

LAKE LOUISE

TO paradise in regions wild
The North provides an open gate:
Towards the South, a real thrill
Enchants the heart—the glaciers great,
With snow incalculable piled
Upon a mountain higher still:
A turquoise blue and green the lake:
On either side, a mountain lifts
Enormous stones to zero heights,
On which to hoard the mighty drifts
Perpetual and pure that make
The rills of ribbon-white upon
Their unscaled sides: the shifting lights
Will soon reveal, the search begun,
Fantastic colors—precious gifts—
And flowers abundant, plants and trees
Enhance the charms of Lake Louise.

MIRROR LAKE AND PLACID

ENCIRCLED by a purple chain
Of monuments eternal, lies
The lake, a mirror, cool and still,
That sees each cloud and from each hill
Reflects the pines till daylight dies:
The wood-thrush, even in the rain,
Will whistle early in the morn;
The wood-peewee, with sad cadence,
From bough or bush or rustic fence,
At noon directs the errant birds
To seek their mates and find their nests,
In language just as plain as words;
The robins strut and search the lawn
For worms and bugs, their russet breasts
Expanding with the frequent note
Emitted by a pulsing throat.
Contiguous is Placid Lake,
In which the mountains bathe their feet;
And when the snow-white clouds, so fleet,
Have kissed and clung to tops and sides,
And with reluctance rise to slake
The thirst of loftier spots, abides
The dew upon the Sentinels
That bar it from a timid guest:
But if the world one can forsake,
The virgin forest sings and tells
Of peace and beauty, joy and rest.

A SEA-GATE SUNSET

BEHIND the harbor hills and far beyond,
The setting sun, with varied hues, had kissed
The willing clouds, and in the wondrous West,
A purple haze enmeshed with filmy veil
The tortuous shore and highlands overhung:
The bay unruffled, save some spots a breeze
Its cooling breath had spent, while overhead,
With tendrils crescent reaching out, a new
Mysterious moon, its silver light so soft,
Had almost grasped the pendant Venus near
To use it for her diadem, when night
Enveloped all, and myriad stars appeared
To gem the sky: the silver changed to gold,
And swiftly raced the evening star ahead
To shed its diamond rays upon a world
Unknown: Selene followed soon, and stars
Were left to pale before the Master-light.

TIDINGS

I SAW a charming cottage near the sea,
A spot for perfect peace and joy to reign:
The world was scarce a faded memory,
So far removed its worries, cares and pain.

A cactus, palm, or any southern flower,
A welcome finds and unrestricted grows:
The vines entwining make a shady bower
To whisper love before the daylight goes.

Around are hills with brush and verdant trees,
Relieved by streaks of white and yellow sand,
And through the Golden Gate a cooling breeze
Brings tidings from a far-off foreign land.

AMALFI

AMALFI beckons me, I feel
The balmy air, the mystic spell
Of peace upon my senses steal—
The peace the monks had learned so well:
Their home upon the mountain side
Of solid stone, so strongly wrought,
Remains: the colonade, its pride,
With fruitful vines, is quickly sought,
Although from every point is seen
The lavish hand of nature when
It gave such vegetation green
And cloisters quaint to godly men:
Above, the mountains and the sky;
Below, the water, purple, bright,
Upon whose riplets constantly
The playful sunbeams sparkle light
Like myriad, priceless gems: at night,
The moon a silver wake provides;
And undisturbed the shore by tides,
A welcome tends and seems to say,
"The quest is over: rest, and pray!"

CAPRI

A BEAUTIFUL island that all may see
Stands guard near the main-land in far
Italy;
It is rugged and small, but prolific and fair,
And its people rejoice in their freedom from
care.

The waters of purple delight from its shore
To borrow some tokens, but covet still more
Of its soil, and have burrowed one side
For a grotto, all blue, to be seen at low tide.

Sorrento is seen as we look on the coast;
And standing alone, like a ghoul or a ghost,
With a tongue touched by flame from its
uplifted head,
Vesuvius watches its multitude—dead!

Between lies that wonderful changing sea,
So rich in its tints, then again so free
From all purple and green—just a large
sheet of glass,
A quiet, transparent and colorless mass.

A daily delightful event for the eye
Is the sun as it sets in the Western sky,
With a prodigal waste of its silver and gold,
Producing a picture of beauty untold.

Need I tell you the name of this marvelous
isle
So diminutive—great notwithstanding? A
smile
Is your answer: the truth, then, must be
You know it—yes, love it—the isle of Capri.

THE COLOSSEUM

THE night was clear:
The moon with borrowed light
Looked down upon the ruins grand
Where oft before, two thousand years
And more, from every heathen land,
The gladiators trained to fight,
Had crossed their fatal spears;
Where Christians tortured, turned
A welcome ear
To beasts more kind than men—
Wild beasts whose roaring advent brought
Relief for which their victims yearned
So long, and vainly sought—
The perfect peace eternal when,
Unchained, unmoved by tears,
The Spirit makes its flight
Beyond this sphere.

BELLUNO

HIGH in the clouds,
But higher still the jagged cliffs
That circle—some with snow-capped peaks—
Belluno, ancient, Alpine town:
Fretted the shrouds
Of ragged turrets making rifts
For air so pure and light that speaks
A message heavenly coming down.
Your fortress builded by a hand
Supreme, forever shall defy
Assaults of every kind: the land
Is blessed that almost joins the sky.

CATACOMBS OF SAINT CECELIE

A TINY taper lights the way
To tortuous paths beneath the sod,
Where christians in an evil day
Could supplicate their unseen God.

Within this city, underground,
Concealed a thousand years, remains
Of martyrs young and old were found,
Forever freed from mortal pains.

Their patron saint, the story goes,
Was buried here four hundred years
Unchanged: and since, the whole world knows
Her name protects these tombs of tears.

POMPEII

SILENT city of the dead,
Lost for centuries, then found,
Why was your defenseless head
Chosen for a funeral mound?
Whither did your people flee?
Were they buried by the dust?
Did they rush into the sea
Seeking shelter where they must?
Why were some by lava chained,
Seemingly to danger dumb?
These alone have still remained,
Calcified for years to come.

RIGI-KULM

THE sun above, the sea below—
A sea of fog, like driven snow,
Enveloping the lakes and hills
And lower peaks against their wills:
As far as eye can see around
The Alps majestic, some snow-bound,
And glaciers, too, the sun defy,
But warm the earth on which they lie
And keep secure their rugged tops
From life or any kind of crops,
Except the ones they hold and hide
Beneath their massive weight. The tide
Of time and cares of men below,
Cannot disturb nor change the glow
Of sunrise and of sunset grand,
In this enchanted, lofty land:
The rainbow colors kiss good-night
Each snow-bound crest, and with the light
At early morn, rejoice to stay
A moment; then, compelled, they stray
To pastures green and haunts of men,
But know they can return again
To peace and quiet, where the blue
Of Heaven's vault shall veil anew
The craigs and peaks so high in air,
Committed to the Master's care.

SANS SOUCI

TWO lions done in marble white
Command the terrace day and night
On which a palace, silent, stands:
Magnolia blossoms fill the air
With odors luscious everywhere;
Abundant, trained by many hands,
The flowers; fountains small and great,
And virgin trees, the gift of God,
Whose fulsome tops with music nod
To every breeze, insatiate:
A pheasant frivols fearlessly,
And many a bird delights to bring
Its chosen mate and breed and sing
In this entrancing Arcady.
The quiet waters in the lakes
Invite the snowy plumaged birds
To stay their flight: and wakes
The day to hear the lillies words,
And hum of happy, busy bees
That rifle blooms of plants and trees
To satisfy a short-lived queen
In Sans Souci, forever green.

IMPROMPTU

I MAY not guess your native state,
Nor whence you wandered to this clime,
But this I know, some special fate
Together brings us at this time.
I cannot classify your voice
As from the East, or North, or West;
And though I dare not tell my choice,
It finds an echo in my breast.
My heart would place it in the South,
Despite the accident of birth,
Because one word, from such a mouth,
Can make a Heaven of this earth.

PEN PICTURES

E. C.

HIS voice sublime
Will swell the choir celestial where
The angels happy hasten him
On pinions poised, surpassing fair:
And while, their eyes with weeping dim,
The countless thousands here bemoan
Their loss, they feel that they have heard
The one supreme in song and known
The heart to peoples all endeared
For endless time.

W. W.

HE was opposed to war—
Why not?—and, yet, the call
Of liberty afar
He heard, and with a wall
Of human force the sway
Of kings destroyed—and then
Disclosed the cryptic way
That lead to peace again.

A BOY!

A BOY!
To live with him a second life,
And watch his growth in coming years,
To shield him from the storm and strife
That causes mortals many tears:
A vista long of happiness
Your love and tenderness must bless.
What joy!

A CRYSTAL WEDDING

FIFTEEN years, no less, no more:
Happy?—Surely, else the score
Would have been long since erased
And another made in haste.

Crystal is a fitting term,
Suited to conditions firm,
Crystalized by hopes and fears
Shared by two, so many years.

May your golden wedding find
Both in health and of one mind;
Then the life upon this earth
Makes you seek a second birth.

LOUISE

KEEN for the strife,
Full of the joy of doing,
Ready for work or wooing,
Hearing the best, and singing
Melodies, haunting clinging,
Pulsing with life,

Surely this earth
Gives you its richest treasure,
Health, and in fullest measure:
Yours is the obligation:
What is your aspiration?
What is it worth?

L. G.

WITH fingers frail he stroked his beard;
And from his spacious chest was heard
A voice of beauty, depth and power
As iridescent as a flower,
That seemed to loose a secret well
Of pleasure hidden in my heart:
But who may dare or hope to tell
The wonder of consummate art?

HIDDEN

A DAUGHTER nine days old!
The mother truly wise
To keep the great surprise
Securely hidden in her heart,
And dance until the morning light
As easily as any sprite
Untrammeled by domestic art;
But truth a-laughing lies
Upon her breast with eyes
Of blue and hair of gold!

JANE

TELL me maid with violet eyes
Why my soul knows such unrest:
Does emotion or surprise
Cause this choking in my breast?

Do you know your subtle charm?
Let me warn you: have a care
Lest the heart may suffer harm
When it hides your image there!

TOOTHLESS the two,
And scanty their hair:
The one, a silver grey,
The other, in its way,
Almost a gold; the pair,
Dove-like, would coo
And kiss, heedless
Of the gaping crowd,
Laughing aloud
Happily, needless.
Seventy years and more
With blighting touch
On one: the other much
Younger than a year,
Clinging to the door
Of life with many a tear,
And sometimes with a smile.
For one, so much ahead,
The other, waiting while
The certain call would wed
The Future and the Past—
So much for her behind,
And yet, so little when
Compared to life again,
Forever said to last,
Although no finite mind
Foresees the hour. It seems
The veil is always drawn,
We may not know the morn
Here or hereafter. Dreams
Trouble us asleep—awake,

They still perplex, because
Our disappointments take
Away ambition; then we pause,
Dreading to dream again,
Knowing the joy—the pain!

A PICTURE

A PICTURE daily looks at me—
Indeed, its gaze attracts and halts
Whoever comes within its range:
A message in the face I see,
A fancy musical and free,
Enkindling in my brain a strange
Commotion, while its charm assaults
The fortress of my heart, so long
Impregnable—till now, so strong.
Can others read the wonders there,
The wistful eyes, the soft grey hair,
The peace that surely finds a place
In such a calm and trusting face;
The thoughts that come from fairyland
And give a joy before unknown,
The melodies so richly sown
With harmonies by magic hand?
At least, in future years, the day
Can come when every little child
May hear and learn those motifs new;
And then, perhaps, some one shall say,
The poet in his simple way
Has reached the multitude through you
With themes that cannot be defiled.

THE TITANIC

PRIDE of her builders, queen of the seas,
Flaunting her pennants to every breeze,
Swift as a gull in its over-sea flight,
Sailed the Titanic, supreme in her might.

Deep in her hold were the priceless stores
Destined for traffic on distant shores;
High on her decks were the staterooms grand,
Filled with the flower of many a land.

Luxury such as had never been seen,
Furnishings rich in gold and green:
Dining and dancing the pastimes at night,
Full in the glare of the dynamos light.

Feeling secure on this mammoth, the sleep
Seemed to refresh as she sped o'er the deep;
Early the air was instilled with sea-brine,
Bringing new life and a message divine.

Lashing the waves as they lapped at her prow,
Bridging the troughs of the sea, stern and bow,
Haughtily tossing the spray high in air,
Saucily speeding, with never a care,
"Mistress," she said, "of the waters am I:
Never before has the land or the sky
Known such control as I hold of the sea—
Strong and unsinkable—marvel at ME!"

Calm was the night when the sea made
reply:
Dusky, an object that towered on high
Quietly rode on the breast of the waves,
Bringing for heroes their shrouds and their
graves.

Scarce had the watch in the crow's-nest
lashed
Shouted, "An iceberg ahead!" when it
crashed
Full against the starboard side,
Tearing steel-plates far and wide,
Forcing water fast and cold
On the engines in the hold,
Quenching fires and drenching men
Trapped like wild-beasts in a den.
From the mizzenmast on high,
Wireless word of help near-by,
Reassured and promised aid—
Why should any be afraid?

Starboard and forward, a list and a dip
Told of the danger that threatened the ship:
Lifeboats were ordered—the jesters were
stilled—
All with a feeling of horror were filled.

Hearts that are bleeding in grief and
despair,
Know that the nations of earth everywhere
Honor these men and with pride read the
roll—
Greater no love than when death is its toll!

ISADORABLES

GLIDING with rhythmical movements, free
As the birds when they frolic in air,
Dancing and racing so merrily—
Strangers to sorrow, they have no care—
Waving like grasses swept by the wind,
With little to hinder and nothing to bind,
Surely their motion is poetry!

Even entrancing at rest, to the eye,
Because of the art in their pose:
Gracefully tilting their palms on high,
Balanced with ease on their naked toes,
Instantly grasping some subtle sign
From their priestess to alter a curve or a line—
When will she teach them to fly?

E. K.

GOD-GIVEN the power
To draw the bow!
A tender flower
May never know
The joy it gives:
An artist lives,
Not only once, but when
The memory again
Recalls the art: know then
The debt you owe
To such a dower.

SUNLIGHT

A RAY of sun upon the face
Had almost made the picture speak:
And as I pondered on the grace
And charm of her I knew so well,
On whom the busy sunbeam fell,
I could not chide the ray of light
For being spell-bound by the sight,
And nestling closer to her cheek.

Oh! favored sunlight, happy one
To daily visit all mankind,
And often, ere your task is done,
With warmth and love some heart caress
That grieves or lives in bitterness—
It, surely, cannot be amiss
To pause and press one fleeting kiss
Upon the fairest face you find!

J. C.

I HEARD a voice from a faraway land
That welled with the love of the song:
I feared lest the world might not understand,
So I sought the singer, to grasp her hand,
And tell her I knew; that so long
Would those tones be golden, and deathless the art,
As they sprang from the depths of the human heart.

A. C.

WITH lavish hand the Deity
Expended many gifts on thee:
But do you know that in your voice
That hurries every heart that hears
And makes the soul though sad rejoice
There lies down deep a font of tears?
Its echoes ringing cannot find
The words to tell them—but the wind
Will blend them with the nature notes
That spring from many feathered throats:
Long, cherish, guard this priceless thing
And comfort hearts awearying!

E. G.

FOR many years his blighted eyes
Have tried in vain to see sunrise;
But through his ears,
Responsive to his fingers slim,
With joy and tears,
His violin has brought to him
The colours all from nature, pure:
Could sight itself have given more?

R. B.

WELL of joy, of hope the spring,
Even truth may give a sting:
Sweet its message, clear, unsought—
Bitter when by sorrow brought:
Cupid is a jealous faery:
Never mortal wise or wary
Spurned the law that he ordains:
Love is King! Supreme he reigns!

A PASTOR

TO measure life by years, not deeds,
Is usual with those that err;
But one who finds and fills the needs
Of aching hearts and poor lost souls,
And brings them to the sheltering folds
Where human ties are sweet and dear,
And hope eternal gives anew
The strength to struggle and to fight,
The courage needed to be true,—
Must realize that on this earth
His years are measured by his worth,
Which God alone may judge aright:
No wonder then, fond brother mine,
That fifty Winters—dare I tell?—
Have passed and hardly left a line
Upon your brow; and that your hair,
Though touched by grey, bespeaks no care,
Because your people love you well!

CALLING

ARE you calling me?
Can I mistake the voice I hear,
Far-off at times, then again so near,
Chanting a melody soft and low,
Only permitted to lovers to know,
Giving ecstasy?

I am calling you:
Although no sound from my lips is heard,
Out into space hurries each fond word,
Driven by energy stored in my heart,
Straight to the soul of its own counterpart,
Faithful, loving, true.

IN MEMORIAM

(*F. S. Ober*)

FAITHFUL, thoughtful to the end—
Death's messenger had called
Long since, and spirit forms
Were waiting anxiously
To greet a kindred soul;
And, yet, though gasping, sore,
He would not pass into the world
Beyond, until he sent his love
To those who were his friends
On earth—for whom he would
Provide a cordial welcome
In the great unknown.
Old friend, the prospects brighten
For the life to come, since
We may hope again to know
The blessing of your friendship there:
Comrade, brother, we expect
To join you in eternal peace!

A VOICE

A VOICE at night, in the stillness heard,
But just as clear in the busy throng,
As sweet as the note of a singing bird,
And sweeter than any written song,
Is whispering words that make my heart
Pulsate in quivering, quickened throbs;
I stop to listen, but quickly start,
Amazed to find I am choked by sobs:
Too late, I know the truth to be,
The voice of love was calling me.

CONTENT

USELESS both feet,
But swinging along
On crutches, swaying,
Almost playing,
There came from her throat,
Ravishing, sweet,
The lilting note
Of a merry song:
And I knew what I heard,
Like the trill of a bird,
Was a parcel and part
Of the well of content
In the depths of her heart:
The body was bent,
But beauty and truth,
Twin vassals of youth,
Lit luminous eyes
That mirror the skies
And the soul, infinite.

THE SONG SUBLIME

THE music written, played or sung,
May give delight to those who know
The mysteries and magic tongue
In which the cadenced phrases flow:

But every class, in every clime—
The creatures dumb—or deer, or dove,
Untutored know the song sublime
To thrill a heart or tell their love!

THE HARVEST MOON

THE legends say the Harvest moon
Is far the best of all the year;
Perhaps it is, but very soon,
The same of other moons you hear.

The beauty lies, not in the star,
The music sounds, not in the spheres,
But in the eyes that gaze afar,
And in the heart, with listening ears,

The soul that is with love in tune,
Can find in every earthly thing,
A far resounding, echoing rune,
That stirs the heart and makes it sing.

A heart at peace, a mind at rest,
Would give to life upon this earth
A cup so full of what is best,
That we might scorn a second birth.

LOVE—BLOOM

I PLANTED the seed of a flower rare,
In earth prepared with infinite care;
But wind and want of rain and sun,
Completely undid the work that was done.

Unknowing, unthinking, a love-seed fell
On soil untilled, in an unknown dell;
And without the aid of sun or rain,
Its bloom and perfume have known no wane.

A KISS

I WAKED her with a kiss:
Who knows what thoughts, unfettered then,
Were flitting through her brain, at rest;
What visions weird, or dreams again
Of love unknown, had filled her breast?
I only know my bliss!

All dreams may be surmise:
But when the curtains of her sight
Were barely drawn a line apart,
My soul was stilled with sweet delight,
I knew the joy that filled my heart
Was love-light from her eyes.

LOVE'S SYMPHONY

LIVING can give many joys,
None so great as love may be,
Time alone all else destroys,
Love lasts through Eternity.

Dying may to some give pain,
One at least may ever deem,
Life has never been in vain,
Love has made it one sweet dream.

For the Future have no fear,
Let the Past a memory be,
Listen, you yourself may hear
Love's ecstatic symphony!

HUMILITY

THE stars that twinkle and that shine
A wondrous source of beauty are;
But science only can opine
The secret of the shooting star.

What can the soul, to land chain-bound,
Pretend to tell us of the sea—
That restless, boundless girdle 'round
The earth for all eternity.

The simple fools may jest and jeer
Who never raise their eyes above,
Too ignorant to even fear
The force or fire of holy love.

Embrace the heart that has its grief:
The life that only knows sunshine
Can have no infinite belief
In what is human or divine.

Humility alone can bring
The mortal mind with God in touch:
They tell us that the Heavenly King
Has filled His kingdom full of such.

SEA-GULLS

FAR from their homes, on tireless wing,
Only the waves of the sea for a bed,
Sea-gulls will follow, with rhythmical swing,
While the propellers are forging ahead.

Distance and time are not factors to them,
Storms only hasten and help them along:
Most of their kind they can rightly contemn—
One shrill, sharp note is the whole of their song.

Even their bed is as restless as they,
Cooling their feet and caressing their breasts:
Nature, however, has taught them the day
When to return and revisit their nests.

FREE

THE mind is free—
But not on land,
And never at sea
Until the spirit that gave it birth
Has taught how little this life is worth,
Without the hand
Of Deity.

The heart is free—
But not below,
Nor even above,
Unless some power has made it know
The bliss that alone can make it so—
Unbounded love
Eternally.

LOST AND FOUND

LONG, long ago, just when I can't say,
But it seems to me forever and a day,
I lost my love, and I don't know how—
Unless—but its idle to guess at it now.

Twice in the night, before it was dawn,
Came a voice of distress by some spirit borne,
And only the years in the future told
How two little lambs had entered the fold.

At last came a line—just a simple note,
Clear and concise, in which she wrote
That in trouble and pain the old, old love
Alone stood the test and was help from above.

Perhaps we shall never discover nor know
How God works his wonders and makes love grow:
But a force irresistible holds in its power
The God-born love, not the love of the hour.

One never can tell what the Future may bring,
We are seldom quite certain of anything;
But I know that my love in the years gone by
Is still mine to-day and forever and aye.

LOST LOVE

YOU may mock
At the heart overflowing with grief,
You may lock
In your breast any thought of relief,
But some day
From the depths of your soul you shall know,
You must say
No mortal may live without woe!

My heart bleeds
When I think of my love in the past;
My soul needs
Just one more tender word that may last;
My will craves
What it once thought it held quite secure;
My mind raves
At the loss it must feel evermore!

MOTHER-LOVE

THE door-step of a busy thoroughfare,
With surface lines and elevated cars,
And noisy workers welding iron bars,
Reveals, in gingham dress, with raven hair,
A woman of the working, plainer class,
Whose face is radiant with a careless smile,
As in her lap, outstretched and happy, while
Upon its face and head (a tangled mass
Of dark brown curls) the kisses rain,
A playful child inspires that mother-love,
So pure, unselfish, straight from heaven above,
Which never has its like on earth again.

A MYSTERY

WHEN shall we know—God grant it be soon—
Music unwritten, but heard in our sleep:
Why does its wonderful entrancing tune
Lie in a mystery ever too deep?

Down in his heart, in the peasant's breast,
Untouched by trouble, and unmoved by pain,
Poetry exquisite, never expressed,
Flows from an unending, natural vein.

Working untrammeled by sight and by thought,
Pictures unconsciously limned by the brain,
Artists remember; but when they are sought,
Canvas and colour refuse them again.

LOVE-LIGHT

MY heart like a bud that had never bloomed,
To shade and shadow seemed hopelessly doomed,
No ray of sunshine nor breath of Spring
Would kiss and keep it from withering.

The light from a tender, human face,
Aglow with pity and exquisite grace,
Illumined the plant, all drooping alone,
And made from the bud a rose full-blown.

ABOVE THE CLOUDS

ABOVE the Clouds,
The vault of Heaven arched and boundless,
The azure blue so pure and clear,
The air itself so rare, and fresh and free,
Instil into the mind the groundless,
Hopelessness of plans projected here,
Regardless of the great Eternity
Above the clouds.

Above the clouds,
Our thoughts may always soar with ease,
And bring to us a fuller dawn,
Replete with knowledge of a sweeter life,
In which misfortune and disease
Can find no place: the weary, worn
Forget their troubles, know no care nor strife
Above the clouds!

UNCHANGED

THE leaves are changed from green to gold,
And silver streaks the auburn hair,
Sometimes, before its owner fair
Has known the grief that makes one old;
The seasons change from warm to cold,
But human nature everywhere
Remains the same: at least, one thing
Unchanged, amidst so much unrest,
Unfailing joy and peace may bring
To those who serve its altar best.

DREAMING

AWAKE and alert, I seem never to see
The one whom I know is still waiting for me;
But when I am dreaming, those eyes look in mine
And answer my prayer in a language divine.

Perhaps in the Future, in worlds still unknown,
My dreaming may bring me the love it has sown;
The life after death all the sweeter should be,
When love is unfettered for Eternity.

A GOLDEN WEDDING

FIFTY happy, golden years!
Although trials, losses, tears
May have cast some shadows dark,
And the carols of the lark
May have failed to bring you cheer,
When affliction drew too near;
Still, the long association
Is a special dispensation
Granted to but few below:
Yours the real joys to know
Here on earth, and, surely, Love
Shall provide no less above.

A CROSS

SIMPLE, but high
On Alpine crest,
Above the strife
And stress of life,
A cross, at rest,
Kisses the sky!

Steadfast through storm;
The sun ablaze
With torrid light,
The moon at night
With silver rays,
Outline its form.

Token sublime
By ages blest,
With love untold,
Your arms enfold
The heart oppressed
In every clime.

IF

IF I could speak,
The language of the flowers,
Their fragrance lend
To every word and phrase,
What harp or lute,
With all its subtle powers,
Would dare contend—
Unless to suit
Its music to my lays?

If I could use
The language of the birds,
The melody
Bewitching of their lays,
I know my pen
Would not commit to words
Or poesy
My love: but then,
My heart would sing always.

A CHORD

DEEP in my heart, is a chord divine,
Full of a harmony strange to this earth,
Until that masterful music of thine,
Calls it from spirit-land, giving it birth.

Could I translate into words such a strain,
Words that the people could grasp everywhere,
Nations enchanted would sing the refrain,
Filling with melody, earth, sea and air.

LOVE'S MESSAGE

ON trackless ways,
For nights and days,
A message from my soul has sped;
Incessantly,
On land and sea,
It follows boldly, whither led.

If efforts fail
On hill and vale
To reach the heart to which it goes,
It will defy,
However high,
The peaks that boast eternal snows.

The dark below,
From which we know
That raging flames may rarely rise,
Will only speed
The soul whose need
Is love supreme, that never dies.

I have no fear,
Though never here
The message finds its destined goal,
In spirit land,
A loving hand
Will grasp and greet my longing soul.

TEAR DROPS

I AM thinking of you:
In the hush of the morn,
Ere the rose-fingered dawn
From the darkness is born,
All alone, heavy hearted,
Come the dreams when we parted
Of a love old, yet new.

I am singing to you:
In my heart is a strain
Oft repeated again
In the same sweet refrain,
Softly speaking or calling;
On my cheeks, there are falling
Pearl tear-drops, like dew.

I am longing for you:
Does your heart feel my thought?
Has your consciousness caught
From the ether waves naught
That my heart throbs are saying?
Are you yourself praying
That those dreams may come true?

AFFINITY

ALONE I've waited, suffered, wept,
The years have passed, and still my grief
In silence borne, has on me crept:
The Future holds out no relief.

It seems that every hope has fled,
That love and sunshine all about,
Cannot by chance, upon my head
Descend, and much less seek me out.

And yet, another sense has told,
That on this earth not far from me,
A heart is beating, in whose hold,
My own love-fire glows brilliantly.

How can a flame forever last,
Without renewing proper food?
To make it stand the wintry blast,
Unspoken love can not be crude.

But not a sign and not a word
For years between ourselves has passed,
Unless, perchance, each one has heard
The other's heart by grief harassed.

ALONE

I LOVE to listen to the singing birds;
The rustling leaves have music of their own:
But nothing sounds so sweet as do the words
I hear in silence, when I am alone.

My fancy makes me free to choose the voice
That never fails to lure me by its charm:
Besides, I am not hindered in my choice
Of what to hear, and when to take alarm.

The face of one whose memory is enshrined
In all the beauty of a boy's love-dream,
Is with the voice and figure close entwined—
A picture-poem, like a fairy neem.

The fragrance of a blooming flower bed,
The odor from the fresh and new mown hay,
Revives the recollections of the head
That once upon my shoulder loved to stay.

The strains of every air, by time endeared,
The harmonies that often are not scored,
Infuse my mind and cause it to be cleared
Of all unhealthy thoughts it may have stored.

No wonder then, that people are content
To live alone, and never dare to mate:
A love unhappy proves the incident
Preparatory to a better fate.

BOHEMIANS

YOU may have a superstition
Which amounts to a delusion,
Or a simple intuition
That occasions much confusion;
There are fads and fancies funny
That may help or harm digestion:
But Bohemians with money
Must excite comment and question.

It is hard to give a reason
For the foolish things we think;
It is harder still, in season,
To command the printers ink:
But Bohemians are careful
On the lines where others fail:
And though seldom ever prayerful,
They have friendship—not for sale!

An analysis will prove it,
That the heart as hard as stone
(Only dynamite can move it,
Though it really is bone)
In Bohemians is missing.
But, instead you always find
One whose music, sweet as kissing,
Throbs with love for human kind.

FAR AND NEAR

THE night is done,
And linnets are
Astir: upon
The eastern sky
A blush: on high
No daring star
Disputes with day
The right of way;
And yet, the light
Confounds my sight—
For thou art far!

The day is done,
But all is clear:
No midday sun
Could give more light
To guide aright
And calm my fear
Than that I know
When from two eyes,
With feigned surprise,
The love-beams glow—
For thou art near!

ROEANNE (9 MONTHS OLD)

BABIES all may interest:
Clothed in little but a smile,
Each will prove a welcome guest,
When it coos or tries the while.

Dimpled wrists and dumpy feet
Lend their own peculiar charms
To a baby clean and sweet,
Nestling in its mother's arms.

You may think those open eyes
Prettier if a different hue;
But the parents who are wise,
Know that any shade will do.

Naturally, every dear
Has some special cunning ways
Which would take at least a year
To enumerate; these lays

Are to tell you of a child—
Not my own, I grieve to say—
Wondrous fair and meek and mild,
Full of sunshine all the day.

From the hour when she was born,
None who know her can deny,
Whether it be night or morn,
She is seldom heard to cry.

Trustful, calm, a face so rare,
Surely with those eyes of blue
And her soft abundant hair,
She is equalled by but few.

Doubtless this may vex her mind,
How an angel here below,
Can the proper helpmate find—
For her sort is rare, you know.

Smile and coo in peace, Roeanne:
You will find when you are grown,
Peace quite rare, for every man
Tries to cull a rose full-blown.

CONTRAST

A LONG day of work,
A night of unrest,
Suspicions that lurk
Where faith should obtain:
Discouraged by pain,
Unhappy at best,
A body not well—
Does earth hold more hell?

A touch of the hand,
A glance of the eye
That you understand:
A word from the heart
Untrammelled by art,
Your loved one near by
To give you a kiss—
Has Heaven more bliss?

HEART HUNGER

DO you listen while you sleep?
Then I know you hear my cry,
For in slumber, light or deep,
I am calling—You know why!

When you go from place to place,
Can't you see me at your side?
Though my eyes be closed, your face
By my fancy is espied.

Music strange you hear and feel:
Do you marvel at its force?
Could my spirit to you steal,
You, at least, would know its source.

Does the perfume of the flower,
Bring you pleasure, give you joy?
This to me gives every hour,
Thoughts of you that never cloy.

Though you lost your taste and touch
Yet the senses left, just three,
Would sufficient be for such
Individuality.

Do the ether waves from you,
Cause my hungry heart unrest,
Keep me wondering, is it true,
While I suffer, God knows best?

ASLEEP

OUR ship is delayed by the force of the gale,
And tossed by the billows and beaten by hail,
But peacefully dreaming, my darling asleep
In a trundle-bed cot, is unmoved by the deep.

Sweetly sleep!
The hand of another will
Temper the storm:
The heart of a mother still
Shelters your form.

The years that shall follow may bring you delight,
Or even a lover to guard you at night;
But only the love of a mother may last
When fortune and friends are but dreams of the past.

Sweetly sleep!
The hand of another will
Temper the storm:
The heart of a mother still
Shelters your form.

TRUTH

WHO knows the spirit inspiring song birds?
How do they learn what so sweetly they sing?
May be their music is too rare for words,
Save for the words that their own fancies bring.

Can we explain how some wonderful song
Comes to the writer unbidden, unsought,
Unless his muse is compelled by some wrong,
Or by some pleasure that's too dearly bought.

Only the heart that has suffered and grieved,
Knows how to touch by its voice or its word,
That of another too often deceived,
Whether the message be old or unheard.

One kind of music and one kind of song,
Ever strikes deep and in memory stays,
That from the heart, which can never be wrong,
Having the Truth as its key-note always.

AN INSPIRATION

SHE held my hand:
And as her dark eyes flashed
Discreetly, pressed it, unabashed,
A magic wand
To give an inspiration for a song:
No one could fail to write
When sensation, touch and sight
Compelled creative thoughts to surge along.

She held my hand:
The voice of Spring rang clear,
The leaves and birds were near—
You understand—
All nature felt a new impulse in life:
The Winter chill had passed,
Until I saw aghast,
The man who wanted her to be his wife!

SILENCE AND SONG

I CANNOT sing:
Bright though the day,
Dark seems the way
While memories are haunting me
Of one who long since crossed the sea
In early Spring.

At sight of thee,
Even the night
Borrows new light
From distant orbs to give a charm,
My heart is free from all alarm—
I sing with glee.

INTUITION

THE birds seek shelter safely in the
boughs,
The lambs, by hills protected, fear no wind,
But mortals, who depend upon the vows
So rashly made, so easy to rescind,
Ignore the one, supreme, unfailing sense
That offers even animals defense.

The ceremonies by the church compelled,
The forms provided by the civil laws,
May merge two names, but never may they
meld
Two hearts discordant: if you seek the
cause,
Neglect of intuition tells the tale
Of why such unions know no word but fail.

THE STRUGGLE

THE path of knowledge is the same,
Defiant, difficult, obscure;
The goal, success—no easy game
For rich to play, much less for poor.

Sharp, cruel thorns beset the way,
The climb for many is too steep,
And ere they see the dawn of day,
Most weary toilers fall asleep.

The dreamer works, the worker dreams,
Each striving, struggling for the goal,
And while they press their futile schemes,
Each loses more—a mortal soul.

MON DESIR

SOME attracted by a face,
Follow blindly any pace;
More pursue a money prize,
Often won by fraud and lies:
Others for a lithesome form
Weather any kind of storm:
Many are by titles drawn,
Early taught on rank to fawn:
Graces rare, so sweet to see,
When possessed from infancy,
May escape a searching eye,
If no cloud obscures the sky:
But I know the better part,
Hidden by consummate art—
That which worships at the shrine
Of the cross—your soul divine—
Glows in grief that none may borrow:
Will you let me share your sorrow?

PHYLLIS (16 MONTHS OLD)

PHYLLIS you may never know
How your gift has touched my heart,
Nor how every day you grow
Charms from which you may not part.
Later, when some man shall claim
All your love eternally,
Giving you his heart and name,
Can you keep a place for me?

A CONTRALTO

THE secret of the voice you know:
The 'cello tones so deep and low
Come faultlessly and free;
But do you feel that sweeter thrill
Your heart pulsating, never still
Can give so secretly?

Perhaps that very mellow tone
Will wake the heart that with your own
Pulsates in unison:
Will make the chord none else may hear,
Except the one for whom it's clear—
When two hearts sound like one!

ALOFT

MASTER of land and sea
For many years, the mind
Has solved the mystery
Of winged things: the wind
Its servant, bears and speeds
The craft from place to place
More swiftly than the pace
Of falcons fast, and feeds
Aloft with purer air
The fancy fine; while Care,
The brute that all annoys
And stoutest hearts corrodes,
In vain the soul assails
That carried by the gales
Above the clouds, enjoys
Aërial abodes.

A SONG-WRITER

ONLY to look in those wondrous eyes,
Out of whose depths subtle harmonies flow,
Brings back the hopes of a lost paradise,
Seen once in dreams, in the years long ago.

Hearing the thoughts hidden deep in your mind,
Rapturous, written in musical phrase,
Transports the senses until they may find
Heaven revealed in melodious lays.

FORTUNATE

SHE put the rose upon her breast:
And as it moved in sweet unrest,
I thought the flower fortunate,
Despite the fact that envious fate
Would wilt the leaves, the colour fade;
That soon the vibrant passion shade
Would lose its lustre and depart:
At least, it slept upon her heart,
By living apples twain caressed
And knew one hour supremely blessed.

FLOWER FANCIES

A WILD ROSE

FAR from the beaten paths and tracks,
Out in the jungle, all alone,
Singing its song in colour tone,
Breathing a fragrance nothing lacks,
Modestly flourished a sweet wild rose.

Winnowed, perhaps, from some hidden bower,
Why it should seek such a faraway spot,
The wind, its carrier, tells me not:
Why it would waste its short-lived hour,
Only the soul of the flower knows.

CARNATIONS

CARNATIONS may my thought reveal,
If colours give a real tone,
Unless their fragrance shall conceal
The music which is theirs alone.

Perhaps, your latent art can feel
From them an added force to grow:
At least, their beauty must appeal
To those who understand and know.

ROSE-BLOOM

HIDDEN in the earth, a seed
Patiently in silence grows,
Satisfied because it knows
God will tend its every need:
Casting off the shroud of night,
To the world its foliage shows
Why its heart was glad—the light
Lingered, loved, and left a rose.

But its mission, who may tell?
Will it blossom at its best
When the sun has sought the West?
Or will one who loves it well
Wrest it from its bed of clay,
Clasp it to her heaving breast,
Where, to dwell for just one day,
Is enough, by love caressed.

VIOLETS

A ROSE may blush,
But what may violets do
When, nestled close to you,
They hear entrancing music, new,
Except to shew a deeper hue,
And breathe their fragrance sweet,
Until your senses feel and greet
Their song and hush!

ENTHRALLING

I FOUND a rose-bud on the floor,
So young, so soft, so sweet, so pink;
And since, I wonder more and more
If once its owner stopped to think
What danger lurked when to its bloom,
An added fragrance from its fair
But careless wearer gave perfume
Enthralling those who breathed the air.
Perhaps, it never has been missed:
And yet, it were a rich bequest
For him who loved the maid that kissed
And clasped it closely to her breast.

PRETTY PANSY

PRETTY pansy, delicate,
Let me ask you, ere too late,
How your colours mix and blend,
Whence the fragrance that you lend
Even to the ruthless hand
Plucking you from out the sand:
How such tender thoughts you stir,
Though a silent listener.
Were you, dainty, graceful thing,
Moulted from a Love-God's wing?
Can you heal a wounded heart,
Or is this beyond your art?
Tell your secrets just to me:
I shall guard them jealously!

THE POPPY

FROM battle fields the poppy springs
Suffused with memories it brings;
And were not speech to flowers denied,
The tale of those who fought and died
Could reach the mother heart possessed
By grief and give it peace and rest:
But since we know the richer hue
To blood of heroes must be due,
In reverence we speak the name:
Imperishable now its fame.

SPRING SONGS

A-WHISPERING

I FEEL a change in everything,
And all in the space of a day:
Some birds to the North are taking wing,
While those in the South already sing
In their own unequalled way.
A bud appears on a leafless tree,
The grass is no longer grey,
Upon a naked bush you see
Where nature kissed it secretly
To clothe it in colours gay.
Linger, listen! Can't you hear
Spring a-whispering in your ear?

EXPECTANCY

THE buds are here:
The birds are still on the wing,
But not so far away,
And almost any day,
I feel they must come and bring
To my eager ear,
The new notes learned
On their Southern flight:
At break of dawn, the light
May show them returned,
And the air shall ring
With the themes they sing
To herald the Spring.

A BREATH OF SPRING

A BALMY breeze no eye may see
Is wafted through the topmost boughs
And even to the root endows
With sap and green the silent tree.

Its leaves with melody abound,
The birds its branches fill with song:
Below, a weird mysterious throng—
Elusive shadows—play around.

Throbbing with ecstasy, everything
Wakes from its lethargy, eager for strife,
Feeling a yearning for love and life,
Thrilled by the quickening breath of Spring.

THE SOFT SOUTH WIND

WINTER still grips the earth and trees:
Timorous birds make a hurried flight,
But twitter and trill with suppressed delight
As they flit on a balmier breeze:
Sooner than any of human kind
They feel and know that mystery
Repeating itself in history
For aeons passed—that the soft South wind
Awakens the earth
And hastens the birth
Of the buds and plants:
And each throat pants
With desire to sing,
Because it is Spring.

THE SECRET

THE snow and silence hear
When Spring with whirring wing
Sets nature all a-stir

And wakes the birds that sing
Enchanting rondelays:
Sometimes they fail to bring

Through weary nights and days
The message that your heart
Has hungered for always;

And, yet, when they depart,
This truth we have and hold,
That with exquisite art
The secret has been told.

A ROBIN

THE stillness of an April morn
Was broken by the stirring note
That from a happy, throbbing throat
Was welcoming the rosy dawn.

Aroused, I heard this message clear
The robin on a leafless tree
Was carolling repeatedly:
Awake! Rejoice! The Spring is here!

THE BLUE-BIRD

CLINGING,
Swinging,
Joyously trusting the wind
With something its own heart knows,
A blue-bird, flaunting the snows,
Merrily trills: Go find
Where the violet grows
And search for a rose:
Already the Spring
Gives to everything
A voice that must sing,
Ringing,
Winging.

SONG CYCLES

IMMANUEL

EONS pass, but every Hebrew maid
Hopeful waits and listens yearning:
Palpitating hearts, and burning
Souls impatient, unafraid,
Watchful wonder,
Prayerful ponder
Who shall be the mother blessed,
By whose hand and at whose breast
God has planned to have the child
Brought to full maturity,
Pure and holy, undefiled
With assured security.

By the angel Gabriel,
Tidings of Immanuel,
Secrets of Elizabeth
Reach the city Nazareth,
In the heart of Gallilee:
From his lips the Virgin heard:
"Fear not, Mary," and this word:
"Favoured; all eternity
Bless and praise the son to be—
JESUS, Son of God, and thee!"

Anxiously going,
Wondering, knowing
Ecstasy fine:
Watchfully caring,
Consciously bearing
Concept divine:
"Holy His name!
Merciful Saviour,
Always the same!"

Once in each revolving year,
Comes the season sweet to those
Who have hearts attuned to hear
Helpless infants when they cry:
Hushed the cradle—still the sky
Holds the stars the wise men chose
As their guide to Bethlehem,
Where, as every one now knows,
In a manger, marked for them,
Lay a child, a prince, a King!
Prophesied for years to bring
Peace, good-will, and happiness
To a world in great distress:
One whose life and power to lift,
Burdens painfully endured
By the lepers, never cured,
Was the special, blessed gift
Granted only at his birth
To the Son of God on earth.

A thousand times ten thousand years,
Cannot efface the wonder wrought
By power sublime: time but endears
The birth so long by sages sought,
The life so full of bitter tears,
The death by which eternal life
Was made an heritage secure,
And all this hard and cruel strife
Could end in peace for evermore.

In the Heavenly choir
You may hear this refrain:
"He is coming again,
In a pillar of fire,
With affection, not ire:

From the right hand of God
He hath taken the Book,
And shall reap from the sod—
Yea, from each little nook—
The rich harvest, so rife;
And a stream, crystal clear,
Pure, with water of life,
Takes away every tear."

LOVE DIVINE

A FAIRY Sprite,
A child of three,
Happy and free,
In dappled light,
Under a tree,
Dancing and swinging,
Laughing and singing,
Enraptures me!

A maid, I ween,
At least sixteen,
Feeling the fire
Of golden youth,
Full of desire
To know the truth:
The earth below
And the sky above her,
The streams as they flow
In their winding way,
The stars and the moon
To my heart plainly say:

She has come; the boon
Of this life you may know—
Tell her that you love her!

Oh! for the language in which the heart
speaks!
How can the voice surcharged with love,
Eager to shout from the topmost peaks
Paeans of joy to the stars above,
Tell in soft whispers the story of old,
Place on her finger the circlet of gold
Binding for life, yet making so free
Souls that are mated eternally?

Let silence speak: no words can tell
The feelings in my heart so deep:
Unless my sighs can make her weep,
Unless my eyes tear-stained dispel
Distrust, or pity at my grief
Can faith, affection, love compel,
As well as infinite belief,
My soul its tender thoughts must keep
To treasure in the endless sleep!

She is mine!
Yes! for twenty years
We have shared every sorrow,
And known that to-morrow
For us had no fears.
Hearts clean and pure
Bound by faith evermore,
Live to learn and learn to live,
Know the best that God can give—
Love divine.

WORLD WAR WEAVINGS

THE CONFLICT

WAR, a madness, hews its path
Through peace and plenty, though
The Christ has come and taught and gone
Almost two thousand years!
The useless, bitter tears
Of widowed, pregnant women, worn,
(Ten million aching hearts forlorn)
Can never drown the woe
That follows in the wake: the wrath
Of injured nations, when assuaged,
Must leave a trail of waste and death,
With refuse, corpses, offal foul
Polluting many a water-way—
And none to garner grain by day,
While any blinking, barking owl
At night may hoot with tuneless breath
Where people's rights have been outraged.
And shall we never know the peace
That passeth understanding here?
Our culture, boasted must appear
A savage jest: the only lease
Perpetual is based on might—
Unless the brotherhood of man
Shall shed a kindlier, holy light
To change the present human plan.

AN APPEAL

WARRIORS, brothers, from hatred awake!
Now, in a frenzy misguided, you take
Lives that are precious, and give up your own:
Vengeance belongs to the Father alone.

What is the profit? Where is the gain?
Millions are wounded or crippled, or slain:
None seek your country, but all the world grieves;
Sorrow comes quickly, how slowly it leaves!

Civilization and culture demand
Peace for the arts and for each native land:
Silence the cannons! The swords—let them rust!
Brotherhood, love are the weapons to trust.

THE HARVEST

INHUMAN, ruthless rulers, late
So learned, now so full of hate
That neither law nor right appeal;
Unmindful of the common weal
And human sufferings: to all
Who fail with you to stand or fall,
Or happening on your wretched path
Of desolation, dare your wrath,
A mere machine of Hell that kills—
The time must shortly come that fills
The cup to overflowing! Then,
Discredited, despised, all men
With blasphemy shall join your name:
Your people branded by your shame
For years to come, must surely learn
In time, your iron hand to spurn:
That for a dynasty their sons—
The decent, honest, worthy Huns—
In vain have shed their blood; and not
Their deaths can cleanse the awful blot,
Nor purge the nation, once so wise
On which the world with grateful eyes
Admiring gazed. Your work is done:
Your word is broken: where is one
Who trusts your promises? The day
Is near for democratic sway:
Upon your heads, your very own
Shall heap the harvest you have sown
And wrest from shame their troubled race
To rise and hold an honored place!

OUR FLAG

STRIPES, alternate red and white,
Stars upon a field of blue,
Emblem glorious—the sight
Thrills the very heart of you!

Everywhere it floats or flies,
All the world shall surely know
Human life and mortal ties
Safe and sacred thrive and grow.

Peoples garnered by the winds
Sweeping over every sea,
Learn the liberty that binds,
Love the flag that made them free!

WOOD AND IRON

A CHANT of love—a song of hate—
For each, a cross the fitting gift
And token, rightly understood:
Our Saviour on a cross of wood
Was nailed on high, to expiate
The sins of others and to lift
From hapless man the curse of Cain:
An iron cross too light a weight,
But suited to the loveless breast
That knows not peace, that cannot rest,
Embittered by a song of hate:
Impaled, the cross shall there remain!

UNAFRAID

ABLAZE with light,
And holding to her breast
A precious weight,
The river, restive from the tide,
Upbears a nation's armored pride—
A fleet, serene at rest,
Insatiate
At bay, and belching shot and shell
As if the very powers of Hell
Were loosed. Humanity
May count upon its ready aid:
Its voice explosive, unafraid,
Upon the land and sea,
Demands the right.

THE TOCSIN

THE tocsin sounds, and every breeze
That sweeps the earth or stirs the seas
Is pregnant with its melodies:
America for liberty
And suffering humanity
Unsheathes the sword: with all her might,
Unflinchingly, she joins the fight
To curb and crush autocracy
And prove her own democracy:
Her blood and treasure she will give
That others too may work and live
Untrammeled: nothing less could make
Her follow in the gruesome wake
That carnage leaves: and nothing more
She seeks, except to pry the door
Ajar that leads to law and right,
Forever keeping day and night
An open path and shining light!

April 6th, 1917.

CHATEAU-THIERRY

UPON the sacred soil of France
Where naught had stayed the Hun advance
For many days and nights, the tread
Of troops untried, untiring, led
By forces spiritual, sublime,
Was heard afar, in measured time.
A single aim impelled each breast
That journeyed from the far-off West—
To stem a plague—the robber band
That pillaged, raped and raised its hand
Against the laws of God and men;
That murdered women, maidens, when
Its lust was satisfied; that knew
No law but force; that even slew
The helpless, nursing babes—the Hun,
A beast unspeakable! Let none
Forget his many deeds of shame!
Unmindful of the holy flame
That blued the blade of liberty,
He boasted that democracy
Would never risk its freedom gained
In years long passed—so long maintained
Without a struggle; that its quest
Was ever gain—unscarred its breast
By Fate or need, it could not fight,
Untutored and afraid. Their might
Was heralded to every clime,
While right, a stranger, bode its time.
At Chateau-Thierry soon they learned
The freeborn men of peace they spurned;

And as their lines would melt away,
And every effort failed to stay
The irresistible onslaught
Of decent, fearless foes, they sought
A refuge by a swift retreat—
But swifter still the freemen's feet
Pursued, until aloud they cried
To get an armistice: they died
In masses on each other piled:
The woods and streams were all defiled
By corpses foul: so fast they fled
They would not pause to shroud their dead!
America, at least, in part,
Had paid her debt to France: her heart
And blood and brain, the world must see
Are at the call of Liberty.

GLADSOME GREETINGS

A WHIM

IT may be just a whim of mine,
But when I greet the New Year day,
Before me stands a living line
Of those who on this mundane way
Make life so sweet: the spirits, too,
Of friends who, silent, tread the road
That all must learn, in this review,
Appear from that unknown abode,
To testify that love remains
Imperishable. You are one
Whose image clear and dear obtains
In the array of those upon
The earth; and this the reason why
I send my word of love ahead,
To tell you so before we lie
Inanimate, upon our bed.

FANCY KIND

A CHRISTMAS thought
Is in my mind:
It was not sought,
But sent, or brought
By fancy kind:
A Friendship true
For yours, and you,
This blessed day,
Henceforth, alway!

AWAKE! ARISE!

AWAKE, arise!
The swiftly racing earth
Again revolving, brings
The day beloved—the birth
Of Christ—for which there rings
From many an old church tower
The deep-toned bells:
Some distant dells
With cannons, at this hour,
Resound; but over all,
The silent spirit call—
The voice of childhood—louder still
On land and sea, in air shall fill
Each aching heart with carolling
How death itself has lost its sting
Through life eternal: then,
The human ties too strong,
May dim or hush the song:
The respite short, again,
To arms, he cries!

A LOVE WORD

THE time is here:
Another year
Has brought the happy day
For children all, and you
And me—let none gainsay
That we are children too!
Away with care:
Rejoice and share
The smile contagious: lend
A helping hand—some heart
Is bowed—a love-word send
To lift the load in part:
For hope and cheer,
The time is here!

OLD AND NEW

THE old year dies, the new year brings
Its multitude of unborn things
That may or may not make for peace:
But why permit the faithful heart
To be disturbed by what may be?
From what has been, we have release:
Likewise, the days that shall depart
Must solve the troubles none foresee:
A new year, on the tireless wings
Of Time, a cheering message brings!

A FEAR

UPON me sometimes steals a fear
That when I send a word of cheer,
At intervals of just one year,
You may this crucial fact forget,
That any day I have not met
A friend, is lost: and yet,
You ask me; How can this be true?
Your feelings ought to answer you—
If not, no word of mine will do,
Because the Christmas season lends
Its charms to little ones, and blends
The loving thoughts of real friends.

THE DAY

A NOTE of discord and unrest
May mar our cheer;
But, every year,
There is a day supremely blest
When hearts attuned in rhythm pulsate:
Rejoice and sing
With carolling—
That day of days propitious Fate
Proclaims! Let Peace
Abide and sorrow cease!

RING THE BELLS!

RING the bells!
The guns are hushed,
The crowns are crushed.
The world no longer weeps:
Upon the earth and sea—
In air—the misery
Of strife and anger sleeps:
Ring the bells!

Ring the bells!
The cradle time
In every clime
Is here: the girls and boys
Have won the fight
For peace and right—
Who dares curtail their joys?
Ring the bells!

GOLDEN GRAIN

THIS greeting speeds
To many friends
Of many creeds:
The season tends
A tone esthetic to the joys
That thrill the hearts of girls and boys—
When grown-ups too, may feel again
The time to winnow golden grain—
The best in life:
Away with care—
The day is rife
With blessings rare!

YOUR BIT

WITHIN your heart you almost know
My Christmas fancies, how they go:
This year compels a different strain
To wing my message once again:
Your Country reaches out to aid
The human race: Be not afraid
To do your bit, however small—
Our Country needs the help of all!

GERMAN GLEANINGS

BRIEF ANSWER

SWEETHEART, what dost thou, the live-
long day?
Thousands of things.
When I am far, what feelest thou, say?
Thousands of things.
Make a confession—what dreams in the
night?
Thousands of them.
When thou hast wakened, what says the
daylight?
Thousands of things.
Harborest secretly wishes, tell?
Thousands of them.
Hast thou among them a nook where I
dwell?
Thousands of them.

AZURE EYES

YOUR eyes of blue, so still, but free,
I searched—their depths I found:
You ask me what it is I see:
I'm healed of every wound.

That pair of eyes have left a sear
Whose afterpains still rule;
But like the sea, those eyes are clear,
And like the sea, so cool!

DOST RECALL?

UNDER the linden trees blowing,
Dost recall?
No end to our happiness knowing,
Nor finding,
First thou kissed me,
Then I kissed thee,
Perhaps, honey child, it was sinful,
But sweet, very sweet, was it not?

Your father would shout to the bower—
Dost recall?
We kept just as still as a flower—
He could call:

PROPHET AND POET

PROPHET, pray quickly me tell
Why flowers and children together dwell:
Pensive, the prophet stroked his beard.
Go to the poet, perhaps, he has heard:
Answer me poet, and hastily say
Why flowers and children together stay:
And my poet thought not long:
Finding a rhyme with pith and song,
This is the charm of blooms and child,
That neither can know of their grace undefiled.
O, thank you, thank you, poet mine,
Your words so sweet my heart entwine.

AFTER HEINE

NIGHT rested on my eye lids,
My mouth was sealed by lead,
My brain and heart were frigid,
The ground my grave, my bed.

How long the time, I know not,
That sleep held me a slave:
At last, I wakened, hearing
A knocking on my grave.

When wilt thou rise, my Heinrich?
It is the judgment morn;
The dead are all arisen,
Eternal joy is born.

I cannot rise, my loved one,
The light no more I see:
Mine eyes from ceaseless weeping
Are blind entirely.

For thee, I'll kiss, dear Heinrich,
The night from out thine eyes,
And thou shalt see the angels,
And splendor of the skies.

I cannot rise, my darling,
Still bleeds my heart so free,
Where, by a word too bitter,
It once was pierced by thee.

I'll rest my hand, my Heinrich,
But lightly on thy heart,
And stop the flow forever,
And heal the wounded part.

I cannot rise, my dearest,
My head wounds bleed—just see
The hole my bullet furrowed,
When thou wast torn from me.

With my own curls, dear Heinrich,
I'll fill thy head's deep wound,
And staunch the flowing blood-stream
Until relief be found.

So soft she plead, so loving
I could no more refrain,
And strove to lift my body,
To join my love again.

Then gaped my wounds wide open;
The spurting vessels take
From head and heart the blood-stream—
And lo! I am awake!

FOLKSONG

WHEN I walk in the garden early,
Wearing my bonnet green,
I am first thinking merely,
What now my love may glean.

In heaven dwells no star
That I my friend would envy:
My heart I would not bar,
If I could tear it from me.

THE WITCHSONG

(Ernst von Wildenbruch)

AT Herzfeld abbey, the prior told
How brother Medardus, grown weak and old,
Could scarcely, he thought, outlive the day:
"Haste, brother confessor," said he, "away
And bid him confess his sins to thee,
Although I know that few they be:
The cloister fifty years to-day
He serves, and in its shades grew gray:
By fasts and penitences he,
Prepared, awaits eternity:
Of all, he is the holiest
And will th' Almighty please the best."
The priest then knocked at Medardus' door—
A silence answered, nothing more:
The confessor crossed the threshold well
And strode within Medardus' cell:
And hour on hour the hours fared;
Amazed, the monks in wonder stared:
"Medardus, blameless in words and acts—
What can he reveal about sinful facts?"

The vesper bells, with muffled call
To chapel summoned brothers all:
They bowed their heads, they knelt around,
For brother Medardus low prayers resound—
But list! there comes from far away
A pitiful voice in a mournful lay.

Up rose the prior from the ground:
The monks gave ear with care profound.
"In Medardus' cell the song is ringing—
It is Medardus who is singing!"
They heard and asked: What can that be?
Those are not prayers and litany:
That sounds like sinful, worldly prate:
And see! and see! within the gate
The confessor hastes, by terror pressed!
"The Devil is the cloister guest!
Medardus to the Tempter fell—
Medardus feels the clutch of Hell!"
The prior lit the holy wand
And held the candle in his hand:
The monks, with tapers lit, beside
The prior walked, with measured stride:
The walls and halls re-echoing rang
The plaintive chant the brothers sang:
"From sinful lust, from Satan's might,
By grace protect us, God of Light."

The cell was open—white, haggard, thin,
Medardus lay on a poor cot within,
His folded hands in fervent prayer,
His eyes with livid fire aglare:
From stammering, quivering lips, a song
Unending, wild, was forced along:
A song so strange, a song forlorn,
Of longing love, of blasphemous scorn—
As if from far-off lands the air
Brought perfumes captivating, rare:
It was a song unlike a note
That ever came from human throat—

A wail of woe—then frenzied zest,
With terror, rapture filled each breast.
The monks their holy candles waved:
"Fly, Satan, let his soul be saved!"
Their crosses swayed, their censers swung—
Medardus all the wilder sung;
And deep each heart atremble rang
The sinful song Medardus sang.
On the monks there stole like a longing dread
A deep, gnawing grief for their lives misled:
They thought of the things they now had not,
Of the days of their youth long since forgot;
And slower, still slower the sound of the choir—
Then silence—they listened, enthralled by his fire.

The prior, pious, zealous, and gray,
With horror filled, stood looking his way:
To brother Medardus he called in a tone
In which righteous wrath was plainly shown:
"Wouldst thou the brothers lead astray?
Begone, damned soul, to Hell away!"
And see! from his cot, Medardus arise!
A luminous glint his face glorifies,
His vacant eyes at distance stare,
As if by a vision enraptured there:
Then, suddenly, tears down his cheeks streaming ran:
To the brothers Medardus to speak began:

"I once was a priest, was pious like you,
Devoutly I read my breviary too,
With a fear and a fervor that rose to a flood,
For young were my limbs, and hot was my blood:
The flaxen locks hung down from my head
As if streams of gold were overspread;
And when first they did my tonsuring,
It was like they mowed the meadows in Spring.
That was the time when our native land
Was held in the grip of Satan's hand:
To lives of shame the women were turned,
And witches were bound at the stake and burned.
That time, there came, as I sat there,
In the dead of night, my lamp aglare,
A rap on my door, a knock, a shout—
'We need you, father, make haste, come out!'
The night was dark, and hollow the squall
As I was led to a bastion wall
Deep under the earth, down a slippery flight,
Till it seemed that Hell must heave in sight.
A torch within my hand was placed;
In a wall of stone, a hole I faced:
'A witch to-morrow, in fire aglow,
Atones for her sins: to her now go:
A blessed death for her prepare,
And save her sinful soul by prayer!'
The bowels of the earth I sought,

And in my throat my breath was caught:
From somewhere came a grating sound
Of clanking chains, and grief profound;
And in the darkest corner lay,
As in its lair a beast of prey,
A woman cowering and bent,
Her head against the damp wall leant:
The torch I fastened to a rung
That from the ceiling, hanging, swung:
'Thy face upon me turn,' I said:
'Come, sister, here, be not afraid.'
I saw how her ear my greetings drank—
How hand after hand from her face she sank:
Her head she turned, then looked to see,
And on her knees she crawled to me:
Her naked arms my knees embrace,
Her eyes are rooted on my face:
I looked down, the torch, with dancing light,
Illumined her beautiful face outright:
I felt my heart melt, warmed by hers—
My eyes were filled with scalding tears;
My lips were mute, as pity crept,
And silent, sobbing, we both wept;
And when my tears she saw, at last,
With trembling arms, she held me fast;
A sob deep of her bosom sprang,
From stammering lips a whisper rang:
'Thou canst still weep? Thou weepest for me?
As I love the good Saviour, I love also thee.'
I was seized by fright at her words of disgrace:

'Recall the hour: remember the place
Thy body to-morrow in flames shall burn:
Repent, confess, to Heaven turn!'
With startled mien she said to me:
'Why must I repent? From guilt I am free.
My parents are dead: alone in a dell,
With grandmother, I was wont to dwell:
My grandmother knew many herbs that cure,
And many a potion prepared for the poor:
But grandmother, bound at the stake, was burned
As a devil's witch—so I have learned.
An ancient song my grandmother sang,
I learned from her lips, so sweetly it rang:
She told me it came from a far-away land
Whose people love-magic could understand:
I sang it, but knew not its meaning: then
I was seized by the hands of heartless men
And thrown into prison—this dungeon cell:
They said that it was the worm of Hell
That sang out of me to corrupt the race:
So to-morrow I burn at the stake in disgrace.'

Her tremulous lips to my ear closely press,
Her eye is imploring, in fright and distress;
On mine her heaving bosom lies—
'Oh, save me!' said she. 'Oh, save me!' she cries:
'To live is so sweet, and death is so dire,
And dreadful the anguish to perish by fire:
No creature have I offended or grieved,

No sin have I done, nor witchcraft conceived:
The hearts of men are just like stone,
But thou art good, thou still canst moan:
The jailer sleeps, the door is free,
Come, let me fly, and fly with me!
We'll tread so softly that none may hear,
The torch we shall smother, no light to fear;
The turret gate leads out to the field,
No one can see, to none must we yield:
When break of day the cocks have told,
We shall be far away, in the distant wold:
The forest is dark, the trees are dense,
I know a place that no one shall sense:
I know a region—the very spot
A treasure lies hidden and long forgot:
We shall search and find it: thou'lt take it away,
Afar we shall fly, and there we will stay,
In a foreign land, just thou with me,
And ever and ever, just I with thee.
No wife to thy heart hast thou clasped in caress,
Nor knowest how love of a woman may bless:
Richer the love that thou shalt know
Than any man on earth, I trow:
The stars are fading, the hours race by,
It is time, it is time! Oh, come, let us fly!'

Her heated breath like the storm-wind blew,
Her white arms round my neck she threw;

Her hair as dark as the wings of night,
Her limbs encircled, voluptuous sight!
With reeling head and with writhing heart,
Ecstatic, lustful passions start;
I bent lower down, her kisses I sought,
Then, trembling, I felt as if back again brought:
'Thou kissest a witch, thou blessest her crime:
No share in God's favor hast thou for all time.'
The word upon my lips was dead:
I flung her from my heart and fled,
By terror driven from her dwelling—
Her screams with despair and grief were welling:
She fell to the earth, she lay on the stones,
And after me followed her sobs and her groans:
But I fled on, out into the night,
On my knees in prayer, awake until light,
Till the night had passed, till the horror was born—
And the horror came at the break of dawn.

The heaven blazed with morning flame,
The people swarming, hurrying came:
In a field far out, where logs were massed,
The stake stood dark, by gloom o'ercast—
And every eye was fixed on the pyre—
There stood she, awaiting her torture by fire.

Like fluttering birds lost out at sea,
So shifted her eyes round anxiously;
Then nearer, with crucifix I drew—
Her searching gaze held me in view—
And see! and see, how furtively
Her head she bows, slightly nodding to me,
A smile her lovely face upon,
Like the fading light of the setting sun!

The flaming brand the torchman swung,
Her languorous eyes on mine were hung;
The flames the branches dry wrapped round,
Her staring eyes held me spell-bound:
Like dust disturbed, the sparklets shivered,
Like falling leaves, her two lips quivered;
And shortly, asudden, I heard a ringing
From burning brush—she had started singing!

Like Spring showers rustling in the night,
So gripped me her song, with its sweet, blessed might;
As if air exotic from alien blooms
Had borrowed and brought their rich perfumes:
As though, said a voice in my ear, thou shalt never
Enjoy the delights thou hast lost forever.
The flames enveloped her naked feet,
She gave a last greeting—a nod discrete:
The black smoke rising around her swirled,
Her pitiful song with the smoke was whirled:

(Deep roared the flames to heaven springing,
Like tremulous bells, she kept up her singing)
My ears with both my hands defending,
'That singing! that singing! When is it ending?'
I turned with a shudder and fled from the spot—
That heart-breaking voice would leave me not:
Wherever I hastened, and whence sped away,
That song, that song, was with me alway;
And whether asleep or awake in prayer,
All day, all night, and everywhere
Since then—it is fifty years to-day—
I hear it forever and ever stay!"

(Medardus looked wild and arose from his cot.)
"I hear her again: perceive ye it not?
Up the walk, through the door, it draweth near!
She treads on the threshold—is here! is here!
Thou woman pure—a witch so they claim,
Thou lovely form that they branded with shame,
Ye luscious lips, ye eyes languid, tender,
Thou sweet, welling bloom of limbs sportive, slender,
Thou rapturous bliss, once offered to me,

Which, disdaining, I thrust into Eternity,
Thou offerest the blessing my crime cast
aside,
For me, heaven's door thou openest wide:
After fifty years of penance and pain,
I come and forever with thee shall remain!"

He raised up his arms—his limbs rigid
stay:
"Medardus is dead," the brothers low say:
They knelt in a circle: the gray dawn broke
Through the windows—the prior spoke:
"What human eyes cannot grasp nor see,
To One above shall manifest be:
It is he that hath said, 'Judgment is mine.'
Go brothers, pray: to judge is not thine!"

L'ENVOI

A FIRE smouldering in my heart,
Has slowly burned for many years;
It has a message to impart
Of life and death, of joy and tears:
And in the midst of many fears
Of critics with envenomed dart,
Has never burst into a flame,
But goes on smouldering just the same,
Awaiting, possibly, some art
To give its message to the world:
Or does it wait to find a name
Which, when emblazoned and unfurled
Will be so plain that all must see
And call the outburst Poesy!

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